



Procurement News - Near and FAR

Volume III, No. 2

Summer 1998

Introduction

Welcome to the quarterly edition of Treasury's Procurement News - Near and **FAR**. This issue highlights synopses of courses attended by Treasury procurement employees and new Treasury websites.

Kevin Whitfield will be the editor of the Fall issue. Articles and bureau job openings are due to Kevin by August 17. Kevin may be reached at 622-0248 or at Kevin.Whitfield@treas.sprint.com. We welcome your comments and suggestions on how the newsletter can better serve you, our customers.

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Procurement News - Near and FAR

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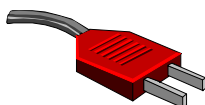
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PAPER

OP Homepage is "Net-ted"

by Angelie Jackson



We are excited to announce that the Departmental Office of Procurement Homepage is public. It can be found on the Treasury world wide web site (<http://www.ustreas.gov>) under "Business Opportunities" or "Treasury Offices." One can link directly to the page at <http://www.ustreas.gov/procurement>.

The OP website will assist customers, whether they are bureau operations, current or prospective vendors, other Treasury offices, or external agencies, in readily accessing all the available tools and services offered and/or used by the

Department's acquisition workforce. Our goal is to provide those looking for prospective business opportunities with Treasury; accessing references and resources to provide quality and timely customer service; or discovering the latest news in Treasury Departmental and bureau offices with fast, easy access to relative, useful information.

The DTAR, COTR Handbook, Treasury Directives (procurement related), and other reference material can be found at the site. Information on the Purchase Card, TAI, the Small Business Program, current and previously printed newsletters; and links to all bureau procurement offices can be found here. There are also direct links to the websites that were listed on the last page of the March/April 1998 newsletter.

As always, we are interested in your ideas. Let us know of other useful information that should be considered for the site.

POLICY CORNER

NIH CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

by Kevin Whitfield

Our bureau chief procurement officers (BCPOs) are presently considering having the National Institute of Health's (NIH) Contractor Performance System available for their procurement offices' use. The NIH system is accessible through the Internet and allows for creation of contractor performance evaluation forms and input of performance rating information. Authorized users may also access contractor rating information from other agencies that use NIH's system. The NIH system has been endorsed by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) and structures its evaluation format based on recommendations found in the *OFPP Best Practices Guide on Past Performance*.

Presently, 34 agencies and offices, including EPA, Health and Human Services, and the Department of Agriculture, and over 2000 users, have access to NIH's system. The Customs Service's procurement office has started to use the NIH system as well and a briefing on the system was provided by Ted Kasna, the Custom's procurement office director, and Janice Hill during the BCPO meeting conducted during April. As a result of interest expressed by BCPOs at the meeting, a follow-up demonstration session was conducted for other bureau procurement office representatives by an NIH representative on May 27 at the Treasury Acquisition Institute. Among the information provided at the session were security features (such as passwords and rating inputting/viewing restrictions), the process for accessing and updating evaluations, and accuracy verification system checks. Those in attendance at the demonstration session provided very positive feedback and expressed an interest in having the system accessible for Treasury-wide use. Bureau Chief Procurement Officers also affirmed their interest in the NIH system and are exploring the feasibility of having the system accessible within their offices. It should be noted that the feasibility of having the Financial Management Service procurement office's internal automated contractor performance system, which was also endorsed by OFPP, accessible through the NIH system, is being explored as well. Among the arrangements that would have to be finalized are subscription/system usage payments, appointment of bureau coordinators, and scheduling of system implementation and training. We will keep you informed of future developments regarding the use of the

NIH system within Treasury. Feel free to contact Kevin Whitfield at 622-0248 if you would like additional information or have any questions regarding the NIH system. (kevin.whitfield@treas.sprint.com)

Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

Angelie Jackson & Cathy Thomas (Departmental Deputy CFO)

On April 26, 1996, the President signed into law the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996. It requires the use of EFT for all federal payments, with the exception of tax refunds, starting January 2, 1999. In September 1997, the Department and FMS issued a proposed rule to implement this new program. The proposed rule addresses how current and new recipients of federal payments will arrange to have their payments delivered electronically, how those without accounts at financial institutions will receive their payments, and who is eligible for a waiver. The proposed rule permits payment recipients to receive paper checks in certain cases where electronic payment presents a hardship (defined in the proposed rule).

It is estimated that more than 10 million current Federal benefit recipients do not have an account at a financial institution. Task forces/groups have been formed to address ways that these recipients can access their funds electronically when the law is fully implemented.

Treasury is committed to being a role model for EFT implementation, especially since one of its bureaus, FMS, sponsored the legislation. The Office of Procurement has been working with the Deputy Chief Financial Officer's (DCFO) staff to assist bureaus in finding ways to implement EFT, so that Treasury will be fully compliant, as required by statute, by January 2, 1999. The DCFO is sponsoring meetings that focus on increasing the volume of electronic payments to vendors and Treasury employees. The DCFO staff has been conducting meetings with bureau staff to share lessons learned, best practices, and to offer assistance where possible in bringing bureaus to full compliance. Representatives from FMS have also attended the meetings to discuss various ways to implement EFT within organizations.

In April, the Office of Procurement worked with the FMS to prepare a position for the Assistant Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, who provided comments to the Civilian Agency Acquisition Council on the "EFT 99" Federal Acquisition Regulation Case. In the memorandum, Treasury's position supports a requirement that agencies collect EFT information as a condition of awarding a contract. The Office of Procurement will work

with the DCFO staff to issue a policy that requires contracts and other acquisition documents to include a requirement that vendors supply EFT information as a condition of award.

The FMS is providing a service called EFT/Assist for vendor payments. The Philadelphia Financial Center will contact vendors and collect the necessary banking information such as routing and transit numbers. Once the work is performed, the information is compiled into a database and returned to the requesting agency. Staff from the Office of the Deputy Chief Financial Officer have been working closely with the Treasury bureaus to promote the program, explain the requirements, and bring the bureaus on board. The following bureaus are working with FMS to enter the program: ATF, OCC, DO, BEP, FLETC, and USSS. FMS plans to phase in the bureaus throughout the summer of 1998.

The Departmental Offices recently issued policy that requires that all travel payments be done via EFT, i.e., employees will no longer be reimbursed through the imprest fund, and payments will be directly deposited into bank accounts. Although some bureaus are well on their way towards 100 % compliance, we encourage and challenge each bureau procurement office to work with its finance office to increase vendor and employee payments.

DTAR Update

by Angelie Jackson

The Department of Treasury Acquisition Regulation (DTAR) (formerly called the Treasury Acquisition Procurement Regulation) was issued on June 1, 1998, and provided to the BCPOs at a June 2nd meeting. The DTAR was effective July 1, 1998. The DTAR is current through FAC 97-04, and must be read in conjunction with the FAR. If you have not received the DTAR, please contact your bureau headquarters procurement office.

The DTAR rewrite team, John Krieger, ATF, Chief, Acquisition Division; Pamela Daragan, Customs; and Tonya Kreps, FMS are commended for researching, formatting and streamlining the regulation.

HELP'S ON THE WAY!

by Dan Sturdivant

On Wednesday, May 6, the Department of the Treasury various other government agencies entered into an MOU with the SBA to streamline the 8(a) program. With the advent of the National Performance Review (NPR), Federal agencies are examining procurement procedures and creating innovative alternatives. One of the procurement processes deemed ripe for exploration and reinventing was the Small Business Administration's (SBA's) (8a) program (Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act - 15 U.S.C. 644, as amended). Under the 8(a) program, the SBA has the authority to contract with government agencies and subcontract with qualified socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.

The MOU limits SBA's involvement to accepting the agency's requirements on behalf of 8(a) contractors. The SBA contracting authority is delegated to the contracting agency with no need to revisit the SBA for further reviews or approvals after the initial acceptance of the requirement. The SBA will be out of the contracting business, allowing it to focus its shrinking resources on business development, financing, counseling, and training for small business firms.

The streamlined process will provide an incentive for acquisition and program personnel to use the 8(a) program to meet their needs. Currently, the 8(a) contract process, on average, takes approximately 90 days. By eliminating SBA reviews and approvals, the MOU will shorten the procurement cycle by approximately 40 days. The contract award process will be competitive with existing government-wide contracts or General Services Administration (GSA) Federal Supply Schedule contracts.

A secondary attribute of the MOU is making Simplified Acquisition Procedures (SAP) purchases valued at less than \$100,000, available for award under the 8(a) program. Simplified Acquisitions (Purchase Orders) have traditionally not been available for award under the 8(a) program because the process was time-consuming. Under the MOU, SAP 8(a) awards are now not only possible, but may be accomplished in an expedited manner.

FAC RULES

by Frances Sullivan

Federal Acquisition Circular (FAC) 97-05 was issued June 22, 1998. The FAC includes the following rules:

Subcontract Consent - This final rule reduces requirements for consent to subcontract. The rule eliminates the consent requirements for contractors that have an approved purchasing system, except for specific subcontracts identified by the contracting officer; eliminates consent requirements for fixed-price incentive contracts and fixed-price redeterminable contracts; and increases, to the simplified acquisition threshold, the dollar level at which consent requirements are included in time-and-materials, labor-hour, and letter contracts.

Availability of Specifications - This final rule updates information regarding the availability of specifications, standards and item descriptions that may be cited in solicitations and contracts.

Small Business Subcontracting Plans - This final rule clarifies FAR coverage on liquidated damages and commercial subcontracting plans pertaining to requirements for subcontracting with small, small disadvantaged, and women-owned small business concerns.

Limits on Fee - This final rule makes FAR Part 16 consistent with changes made in the FAR Part 15 Rewrite. The FAR Part 15 Rewrite eliminated non-statutory fee limitations for cost-plus-incentive-fee and cost-plus-award-fee contracts.

Rehabilitation Act, Workers With Disabilities - This interim rule implements revised Department of Labor regulations regarding affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities. The dollar threshold for use of the clause at 52.222-36 has been increased from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

Trade Agreements Thresholds - This final rule implements revised thresholds for application of the Trade Agreements Act and the North American Free Trade Agreement, as published by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative in the Federal Register on January 14, 1998.

Restrictions on Purchases from Sudan - This final rule adds Sudan to the list of countries whose products are banned from importation into the United States.

Software Copyrights - This final rule adds contracts for

certain computer software programs to the list of contracts for special works to which the Government may obtain copyrights.

Travel Reimbursement - This final rule increases from \$25.00 to \$75.00 the threshold at which contractor personnel must provide a receipt to support travel expenditures.

No-Cost Value Engineering Change Proposals - This interim rule clarifies that no-cost value engineering changes proposals (VECPs) may be used when, in the contracting officer's judgment, reliance on other VECP approaches likely would not be more cost-effective, and the no-cost settlement would provide adequate consideration to the Government.

IPTs Collaborate

by Terri Toplisek

ESI International, in association with The George Washington University offers a new two-day course titled, *Integrated Product Teams (IPT)*. The instructors, consultants for Scitor Corporation, were Charles Appleby and Mark A. Wilson. Both instructors have advanced degrees and DoD experience. The course was presented using a combination of lectures and practical group exercises.

Boeing Defense and Space Group's definition of Integrated Product Development (IPD) is as follows - "The IPD approach requires integrated multifunctional development of a total system in contrast to a sequential development process. Teams are used to implement the IPD process. This team approach facilitates improved communications, inter-functional teamwork and self review to achieve program objectives." Boeing further defines IPT responsibilities as, "Team members perform the product task work. . . They are delegated decision-making authority. Team members must ensure consistent application of functional processes to the program products. Each team member is jointly and equally responsible for the successful delivery of the team products."

The objectives of an IPT are to provide the customer with more capability, sooner, and at less cost; to build quality and excellence in from the start (emphasis on prevention over cures); and to eliminate sequential and redundant program reviews.

This concept is being embraced by both the private and public sectors. The class that I attended contained a good mix of individuals employed by civilian agencies, DoD, and

private industry. Many of them reported that IPTs were being successfully deployed within their organizations.

The instructors explained that Americans are raised in a culture of “rugged individualism”, and take pride in personal accomplishments. ITPs require the collaboration of team members who, as a whole are accountable for team performance. This collaboration produces group synergy where the group achieves an effect greater than the sum of the efforts of which each team member is individually capable.

What makes teams successful? Participation and commitment are so important. People tend to support best that which they help create. Trust your team members and they are more likely to trust you (The opposite is true many times over.) Over achieve with communications -- you are never likely to do enough of it.

Riding the “Fast Track”

by Terri Toplisek

The George Washington University Law School offers a new two-day course titled, *Fast Track Source Selection*. The course is presented by Vernon J. Edwards, a national authority on source selection. The course objectives are:

- To prescribe a streamlined approach to source selection.
- To briefly review source selection basics and key concepts.
- To describe defects of the standard approach to source selection.

Vern stated that the standard source selection process takes too long (6 to 24 months) and contractor proposals cost too much. Government participants are often untrained in decision analysis and Procuring Contracting Officers sometimes don't understand the rules.

The following streamlining practices were offered:

- Use fewer evaluation factors.
- Keep evaluation teams very small.
- Eliminate technical and management “proposals”.
- Allow no more than 30 days for submission of offers.
- Request early submission of capability information on voluntary basis.
- Evaluate nonprice offer terms on pass or fail basis (if price is more important than nonprice factors evaluate on the basis of the lowest priced technically acceptable offer).
- Determine risk based on offeror capability.

- Use price analysis to determine price reasonableness.
- Select contractors on basis of risk and price.
- Award without discussions.

Vern discussed evaluating offeror experience and suggested that it be measured as number of opportunities, not number of years. He defined experience as the opportunity to learn by doing that is gained through exposure to work problems. It's the opportunity to learn effective solutions. Experience relevance factors could include: nature and scope of work; duration of work; and conditions of performance.

What if the technical folks insist on technical proposals? The technical community may be reluctant to relinquish the traditional technical proposal, as they may be uncertain if the contractor understands the work. Vern suggested that we offer them oral presentations, instead - not in addition. He recommended that each offeror's key personnel make the oral presentation - no consultants or marketing presenters allowed! He believes that this approach is far superior to requesting technical proposals.

Vern emphasized the need for the contracting community to read the decision of the Comptroller General. The decisions take precedence over the FAR; therefore, the FAR should not be read without consulting the decisions. At the GAO site, <http://www.gao.gov>, you can find copies Comptroller General decisions and opinions.

INTERNS

Interns “Join the Army”

by Patricia Wolfe and Kelly Curtin

Office of Procurement interns Ron Venable, Kelly Curtin and Pat Wolfe recently returned from contracting “boot camp” at the Army Logistics Management College, Fort Lee, VA where they successfully completed Fundamentals of Contracting (Con 101). Intern Karen Galloway followed in June.

This four-week course provided a general overview of the procurement process from “cradle to grave” and established a solid knowledge base from which the student can build throughout their procurement career. For this reason, instructors and students felt it was very important to have the four-week continuous study rather than having it broken into shorter segments. Although the majority of course participants were Department of Defense employees, this fact did not take away from the overall value of the class. The class consisted of procurement technicians, contract specialists/interns, and technical representatives, representing the Army, Air Force, Navy, National Guard, US Army

Reserve and Army Corps of Engineers nationwide and two overseas students from Singapore and Colombia. The experience level was wide and varied, and this added to the quality of class discussions and team participation in practical exercises.

Overall, the instructors' knowledge of procurement was impressive, and they provided valuable information from their past experiences that clarified the material being presented. In particular, Captain Gregory Bowman, a member of Ft. Lee's legal counsel, was an excellent addition to the course as he brought both procurement and legal issues to the classroom as well as a dash of humor (when the material got a little dry)! Christina Maddux, Course Director of Con 101, provided the orientation and began the instruction with forecasting requirements and acquisition planning. She followed with extensive sessions on competition, processing, and evaluation. Major Perry, U.S. Air Force, covered the topics of Market Research, Lease vs. Purchase, Services, Government Property, Intellectual Property, and commercial determination.

The course was divided into four sections: Orientation; Procurement Planning; Contract Formation; Contract Administration. An exam was given after each section, and a review followed so that the knowledge was reinforced before moving to the next segment. The homework assignments and classroom exercises provided the opportunity for students to become familiar with researching and using the FAR. Each day's reading assignment included "fill in the blanks" from the FAR.

Course Director, Christina Maddux said "I've been very impressed with the Treasury attendees," and she and her staff always took the time to point out that a particular process might be handled differently at Treasury and advised researching agency supplements to the FAR. In fact, Ms. Maddux and her staff are hoping to form a closer alliance with Treasury as they consider submitting a proposal to present Con 101 at the Treasury Acquisition Institute.

ALMC offers a variety of courses in the procurement field to include: Fundamentals of Cost Analysis; Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Management; Intermediate Contracting Course (Con 202); Market Research; Preparation of Commercial Item Descriptions; Software Cost Estimating Course; Economic Analysis Course; Cost Accounting Standards Workshop.

PURCHASE CARD

Citibank Wins Treasury Card Services Order

by Martha Lanigan



Citibank has just been selected to provide purchase, travel and fleet card services for all Treasury bureaus under a two year task order with eight option years beginning in November 1998. The order for separate business lines with possibility of integration and an eventual one card solution was signed on June 30. Transition to the new contractor will begin immediately with a goal of having all purchase, travel and fleet cards reissued by November 30.

The award to Citibank came after a four month selection process involving representatives from all bureaus. The card services task force was chaired by Ted Carter, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Management Operations, and Steve App, Deputy Chief Financial Officer. The objective of the task force was to select one of the six contractors offered under the GSA SmartPay Contract for all of the Treasury card services to take advantage of favorable pricing based on the Treasury volume and to facilitate streamlining based on consolidation.

There are three exceptions to the use of Citibank for card services. The Office of Comptroller of the Currency will solicit for a non-bank provider for their individually billed travel cards due to conflict of interest concerns, and the U.S. Customs Service and ATF will use Wright Express for their fleet card services.

We look forward to working with our new card services partner, Citibank.





Platinum American Eagle Program Launched

by Joan Tuenge, Mint

Legislation passed on September 28, 1996, called for mintage of the first U.S. platinum Eagle coin. A new program with a myriad of details to work out in an extremely short time frame was a challenge. Our utilization of Defense Logistics Agency's stockpiled platinum for working stock allowed the Mint to keep the cost of the program down by avoiding the lease charges and high carrying costs that are associated with obtaining platinum in the open market. The Mint's Public Enterprise Fund flexibilities and procurement waiver were critical in ensuring the success of the program as we subsequently entered into the open market for platinum purchases. After researching industry best practices, the Mint executed purchases using standard industry techniques. As a result, on platinum purchases made to date, the Mint has saved over \$1.2 million for this program. Industry analysts have praised the Mint on its knowledge of the platinum market and ability to become an astute program was largely responsible for turning around the profitability of numismatic and bullion operations and was the major contributor to the \$19 million profit in FY 1997. For the first three months of CY 1998, we have sold 20,750 ounces of uncirculated platinum American Eagles.

Customs Acquisition Reform Day

by Starlynne Knight, Customs

The second annual Customs Acquisition Reform Day, presented by the Procurement Division, Office of Finance, was held on May 21. This annual event was inspired by the Department of Defense 1996 Acquisition Stand-down Day that was dedicated to sharing information, and demonstrating and discussing the changes that have been occurring in various procurement initiatives. At this year's Customs program, the spotlight was on GSA's new improved contract schedules, performance-based service contracting, the Purchase Card Program, FAR Part 15 changes in negotiated procurements, and government wide acquisition contracts (GWACs), just to name a few of the interesting topics. The Customs Procurement Division welcomed guests from the Department of the Treasury, other Treasury bureaus, and Customs local and field offices.

After a kick-off speech by Customs Chief Financial Officer, Vincette Goerl, guest speakers from the National Institutes of Health, the General Services Administration, the Small Business Administration, and the National Industries for the Blind provided dynamic and informative presentations. Customs Procurement Division staff also participated in a number of presentations designed to help co-workers and customers stay current in the acquisition arena.

Contract Award to Motorola

by Jim Lieberman, Customs

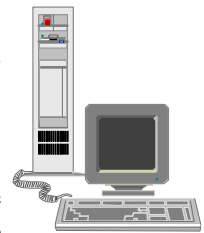
Contract number Tc-98-020 was awarded to Motorola, Inc. on May 29, 1998. Performance commenced on June 1, 1998. The contract is for land mobile radio equipment as well as related maintenance and technical services. The period of performance, including all options, is through May 31, 2003. The contract is available for use by all Federal agencies, and significant use of the contract by other Treasury agencies is expected. The estimated value of the award is \$165 million. One-third of that value represents the estimated usage by agencies other than Customs. Significant cost savings were achieved during negotiations, including a lower than normal price escalation rate and higher than normal discount to the government for prompt (20 day) payment.

For further information contact Jim Lieberman at 927-0435 or Nellie Potocki-Reeves at 927-4901.

INTERNET NEWS

Secret Service Launches Internet Procurement Site

by Andy Anderson, Secret Service



WASHINGTON, DC --- The United States Secret Service Procurement Division announced the launching of its Internet Procurement Site on April 23, 1998. Secret Service customers can now access the World Wide Web to view Secret Service solicitations, amendments, Commerce Business Daily notices, contract award information and procurement information from anywhere in the world.

The Secret Service became the first bureau to post on the Electronic Posting System (EPS). EPS provides a method for buyers to post agency requirements and solicitations directly to the Internet and also allows vendors access through a single, Government-wide point of entry.

As a representative of the Department of Treasury, the Secret Service joins the Department of Interior, the

Department of Transportation, the General Service Administration, the National Air and Space Administration, and the United States Air Force as members of the Electronic Posting System.

In addition, the Secret Service web pages offers a wealth of "no cost" information for vendors, from the basics of how to do business with the government, to the finer points of acquisition reform. With online articles detailing basic principles of business and government practices, the site has become a virtual library for acquisition and financial information. This cyber library hosts a collection of documents and a list of government wide information links. The Secret Service anticipates an explosive growth of electronic information to be exchanged between the government and small businesses.

The USSS Procurement Division designed the site for small businesses interested in contracting opportunities. The site is also available to other vendors interested in doing business with the Secret Service.

"We are very proud to offer this innovative Internet site to the customers of the Secret Service," said Nancy A. Nifong-Kerlin, Chief of the Procurement Division. "The web site is an inexpensive way to disseminate information to the public, and given the high number of businesses in the United States, this service is established to provide a procurement process that is faster, smarter, and more cost-effective."

The site allows vendors to browse the latest procurement opportunities, participate in national online procurement discussion groups, contact Government procurement representatives on a procurement issue, search the Internet for procurement information or download procurement opportunities using any commercial web browser. The final material can be printed, copied or saved into a word processing document.

The long-term goals of this site are to establish a paperless procurement system that will be linked to all Federal Agencies. This will give the small business community the ability to conduct worldwide business with the Federal Government in a paperless environment.

Finally, companies interested in exhibiting at the many conferences and meetings sponsored by the Treasury Department throughout the year and around the country will be able to view information sponsored by the Treasury Department.

For technical information, contact the United States Secret Service Procurement Division Webmaster: Andy Anderson, Procurement Analyst at (202) 435-7148. Visit the Secret Service Procurement Division at:
<http://www.treas.gov/ussc/proc>

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Dolores Smith, Contracting Officer left the U.S. Mint at the end of June to take a job at the Department of the Navy in Norfolk, Virginia. We wish Dolores well in her move and new job.

Joseph Giuliani recently left the IRS to join the U.S. Mint. He is leading the Mint's Corporate Procurement Operations group. Congratulations and best wishes to Joe.

The Office of Procurement moved to a new location during December 1997. Our new mailing address is:

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1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
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Washington, DC 20220

Phone - (202) 622-0540
Fax - (202) 622-2273

Kevin Johnson, IRS Regional Chief Procurement Officer, Northeast Region, and wife Gail, were blessed with their third son, Cameron Joseph on April 6, 1998. Cameron weighed 8 pounds, 11 ounces. Best wishes Kevin and family.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Watch for these future announcements for Office of Procurement positions - GS-1102-13/14, Procurement Analyst, responsible for the web and electronic commerce; and GS-1102-15, Senior Procurement Analyst.

LOOK FOR YOUR NEXT ISSUE THIS FALL!